w/KT comments ~ 9/3/90

Notes From Whole Earth Institute's
First Founder Meeting (5/10/90)

ATTENDING

Founders:
Toni Garrett
Mitch Kapor
Bruce Katz
Greg Steltenpohl

Board Members
Chuck Blitz
Stewart Brand
Bob Fuller
Paul Hawken
Huey Johnson
Kevin Kelly

DISCUSSION:

What Is POINT? What is Whole Earth?

After a brief (if belated) round of introductions, a cursory discussion on the relationship of POINT to Whole Earth, the WELL and the Institute took place. As not everyone seemed clear about the relationship between POINT and Whole Earth, the following definition was put forth by Stephanie Leonard.

> POINT is the parent organization of Whole Earth. The sub-components of the organization are Whole Earth Publishing from whence comes *Whole Earth Review* and the Whole Earth Catalogs, part of the WELL, and the Whole Earth Institute.

What Is the Whole Earth Institute (W.E.I.) ?

As related by Kevin Kelly, twenty-two plus years after its birth POINT is a viable organization with big business questions to answer: who is the future reader of the magazine? how do we extend the demographics to younger age brackets? can we buy all of the WELL? what is our bottom line?

Kevin said that while it is definitely time to stand back and take a hard look at these business type questions, for POINT to abandon all its innovative experimentation and research would be intolerable. If POINT is to continue growing there must be some box on the organizational chart where creativity and innovation can be fostered with old fashioned Whole Earth zeal.

Clarifying it for all of us, Bruce Katz said Whole Earth Institute was created to be this box. Officially the Research & Development arm of Point, the Institute is where innovative projects will be hatched and as Stewart Brand aptly phrased it, "non-lethal experimentation" can take place.

What about helping people cope with/succeed in business?

During one portion of the meeting some discussion, the conversation drifted to how Whole Earth Institute could help people understand the world they work in,

As an example of current problems workers face, Mitch brought up the volatility of the present business environment (especially in the computer world). Another problem discussed was the plight of the entrepreneurs with good ideas, but little capital and Chuck Blitz suggested that Whole Earth Institute itself could become an active participant in the arena by linking them up with investors with a social conscience. SAN. SOCIAL ACTION NETWORK

Some other questions that were asked during this discussion were:

- Are there realistic alternatives to large corporations where people can get things done?
- Are there BIG companies where people are happy? What are they doing right?

Wrap Up Question: What can W.E.I., the Board & Founders do NOW to maintain a sense of connectivity?

Having formulated an amorphous definition of Whole Earth Institute and its purpose, the meeting came to a close and the participants started exchanging names and numbers. However there seemed to be something missing – a sense that while the above discussions had been fruitful, more problems needed to be addressed, more clarity defined and more time spent together.

Agenda what do we want to come out of the mtg with?

To address these issues, some talk was bandied about about holding a second meeting or having Whole Earth Institute sponsor a "Small World Club" (see attachment). While everyone seemed to now understand what Whole Earth Institute was created for, now the focus needs to shift towards defining what it will do to help empower individuals, what projects can be worked on and how future funding can be sought.

STATUS OF PT FDN.

ORG CHART
DIRECTION

MUST MAKE $ AT WHAT IT DOES.
PROJECTS
EVENTS

IDEAS FORUM
CAN BE CATALYST
CREATE FUNDED PROJECTS
WILL HAVE TO RAISE $.

- where can the $ come from?
- How to go abt raising the $.

What is the focus of W.E.I.?

In going around the table, both Greg Steltenpohl and Mitch Kapor stated they had latched on to POINT because of the understanding communicated in the Whole Earth publications. These periodicals gave them a sense of understanding about what was happening around them that other magazines lacked.

The general consensus seemed to be that the idea of helping people understand the age they live in that Whole Earth Institute is committed to and built on. The Institute is where new ways of doing this will be developed so people can better fathom the world they live in, the ideas they are bombarded with and can link up with people of like minds.

Much like the Industrial Revolution, as cited by Bob Fuller, we are in a period of history that is fraught with far reaching, and rapid, change. Although we cheer this change we also have trouble at times dealing with the social, political and cultural evolutionary effects that follow.

A general discussion ensued about the new technological advancements we read about daily and of tribes of people with similar ethnic heritages breaking free from larger ruling countries. From these changes new communities and new problems emerge and people need help in understanding it all and access to like-minded people to communicate with.

What can W.E.I. do to help us comprehend all this change?

As the meeting moved along, the group tried to focus on what Whole Earth Institute could do to help empower individuals. The prevalent notion seemed to be that the Institute could experiment with innovative ways in which to help people understand what is going on around them, direct them to appropriate resources, and offer them a link to interesting personal relationships,

Much like the Whole Earth periodicals and the WELL, the consensus seemed to be that Whole Earth Institute should seek ways in which to link people and ideas so new communities can be formed and thoughts exchanged.

Throughout the meeting people suggested specific innovative projects that Whole Earth Institute could embark on. Some suggestions were:

- Underwriting a Russian version of the Whole Earth Catalog and/or A Japanese version.
- Offering awards for good design in machines, clothing, architecture...
- Proffering seed money for creating a real-time teleconferencing translation capacity so that people in Russia, Japan, Germany, etc can be part of conferences such as the WELL.
- Sponsoring an interactive disk project which would let people access that portion of information from Whole Earth periodicals they are interested in.
- Cultivate multiple global teleconferencing centers like the WELL.

R+D in community-building + networking

The W.E.I. Small World Club

What is a "Small World Club"?

As stated in the book The Small World edited by Manfred Kocher, we live in a small world – we each have a community of two hundred like-minded associates to draw upon for particular items. A Small World Club would be an extension of this idea, a way to formally bind like-minded people together so they can share ideas, resources and companionship.

A Whole Earth Institute sponsored Small World Club would bring together individuals who are bound by the tenets upon which POINT/Whole Earth was founded – access to ideas, tools and communities. These people would be interested in helping individuals comprehend the world around them so they can grow as individuals, or understand the WE to empower the I.

How would a "Small World Club" work?

START A CLUB here -- segue into membership levels for Aint.

Starting with the core group of Board members and Whole Earth Institute Founders, a central database could be created with current data on all members, their addresses and phone numbers, their interests and a brief profile. As part of their registration, club members would also automatically become participants in a private WELL conference in which to share ideas, draw on resources and communicate with other members.

On a periodic basis, perhaps monthly, a feature would be done on one member outlining his/her achievements, interests and ideas. This profile would be posted in the conference and featured in a newsletter where brief biographies of new members would also be printed.

How would members benefit from this club?

define this

As a member of the W.E.I. Small World Club, an individual would have access to a group of similarly minded individuals for ideas and resources. For instance, if one member needed capital but wanted investors with a conscience, s/he could search through the database for matches or post a notice in the private WELL conference.

How should access work?

Furthermore, for a set fee, individuals who joined this club would have access to other members and their associates. For instance, one individual might have specific needs which another member could not meet but might know of someone else who could.

How could we start this club?

As stated above, the core of this club would consist of the current Board members and Whole Earth Institute Founders who would be non-paying charter members. To get this project moving along, some of the things we would need to do include the following:

HOW IS THIS PAID FOR?

- Create a central database and establish a system of accessing this database via the WELL as well as by phone
- Establish a procedure for putting together/editing the newsletter
- Build a system by which members are nominated and set fees
- Open a private WELL conference

While many details would need to be worked out, we at Whole Earth Institute need to know if it is worth pursuing at all. So we ask the following questions:

- Should this club to be formed?
- Would you use it? For what?
- Do you have some other people who might pay to become members?

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AGENDA

where pt is at.

Need to raise funds

6 MOS @ 500. — 3000
4 MOS @ 1000. — 4000
7000.
o/H.

12-5.

LUNCH 12:00 — 1:00

Cyberthon report
— Slide photos. 1:00 - 2:30

Community building 2:00 - 3:00
— Where pt is at.

3 - on

Proposed Agenda
lunch 12:00
Cyberthon report - 1:
discussion
WEI community building 2:

Need to raise funds 3:
to pursue or to do
things that make $.
what's going to keep your interest Balance
+ ~~perhaps get up~~ support. of the time
or Free-ranging discussion.
6

"Similarly minded"

ONE LINO.
every 1½ hr min, take ¼ down, pu. whoever wants to leave.

11
12 30
2
3 30
5
6 30
8
9 30
11
12 30 a
2
3 30
5
6 30
8
9 30 10:5 FINAL P.U.
11:00 — done.